

**Listing of the Claims:**

Please amend the claims as follows without prejudice. No new matter has been added by way of these amendments.

38. (Original) An apparatus for handling pipes, the apparatus comprising a body having a tapered surface and at least a first slip and a second slip slidable on the tapered surface, a slip actuator for setting said at least said first slip and said second slip, said first slip and said second slip having interengaging elements therebetween such that upon actuation of said slip actuator, said first slip is set and said second slip is set by the interengaging elements transferring the setting force from the slip actuator through said first slip to said second slip.

39. (Original) The apparatus as claimed in claim 38 wherein the interengaging elements comprise an upstand and a recess.

40. (Original) The apparatus as claimed in claim 38 wherein said first and second slips each has a pipe engaging surface, a top, a bottom, a rear face and two sides.

41. (Original) The apparatus as claimed in claim 40 wherein said interengaging elements are located on or in at least one of said sides.

42. (Original) The apparatus as claimed in claim 41 wherein the rear face slides along said tapered surface of said body.

43. (Original) The apparatus as claimed in claim 38, wherein said slip actuator sets said at least first and second slips by moving the at least first and second slips down said tapered surface, wherein the interengaging elements allow lateral movement between the first and second slip.

44. (Original) The apparatus as claimed in claim 38, wherein the tapered surface comprises at least two tapered surfaces.

45. (Original) The apparatus as claimed in claim 38, wherein the tapered surface takes the form of a frusto-conical surface.

46. (Original) The apparatus as claimed in claim 45 wherein the frusto-conical surface is located on a main body and two doors.

47. (Original) The apparatus as claimed in claim 46 wherein one of said doors comprises a latch and the other of said doors comprises a catch.

48. (Original) The apparatus as claimed in claim 47 wherein the main body subtends substantially one hundred and eighty degrees and each of the doors subtends between seventy-five and ninety degrees.

49. (Original) The apparatus as claimed in claim 46 wherein said first slip is located on the tapered surface of said main body and said second slip is located on the tapered surface of one of said doors.

50. (Original) The apparatus as claimed in claim 38 further comprising a third slip and a fourth slip slidable on said tapered surface, said apparatus further comprising a further slip actuator for setting said at least third slip and said fourth slip, wherein said third slip and said fourth slip have interengaging elements therebetween such that upon actuation of said slip actuator, said third slip is set and said fourth slip is set by the interengaging elements transferring the setting force from the slip actuator through said third slip to said fourth slip.

51. (Original) The apparatus as claimed in claim 38 wherein said slip actuator is hydraulically actuable.

52. (Original) A method for setting slips in an apparatus for handling pipes, the apparatus for handling pipes comprising a body having a tapered surface and at least a first slip and a second slip slidable on the tapered surface, the apparatus further comprising a slip actuator for setting said at least said first slip and said second slip characterised in that said first slip and said second slip have interengaging elements therebetween such that upon actuation of said slip actuator, said first slip is set and said second slip is set by the interengaging elements transferring the setting force from the slip actuator through said first slip to said second slip, the method comprising the steps of operating the slips actuating mechanism to apply a setting force to the first slip, whereupon the interengagement transfer elements the setting force to the second slip, setting the first and second slips simultaneously.

53-70. (Withdrawn)